

FALL 2012

Accent

CENTER HIGH SCHOOL

AN AVILA UNIVERSITY PUBLICATION



Beth Heide '95

"Avila taught me how to be a phenomenal teacher. It gave me the rigor, skills and background not only to teach, but understand the diversity of learners."

Breaking records, teaching excellence



The evening of Aug. 16 was a watershed moment for Avila University. About 150 University alumni, community leaders, students, faculty and staff gathered to dedicate and bless our new student residence hall, Avila Hall.

The evening was about much more than the opening of a new building on campus. It marked the dawn of a new day as Avila moves ever closer to its centennial in 2016. We celebrated the impact of Avila's mission to transform lives by way of record enrollment, with a full-time undergraduate enrollment of nearly 1,000 students. Amidst the ever-changing face of higher education, and all while enduring one of the most challenging economies in our country's history, Avila experienced a full 10 percent increase in enrollment and had its largest first-year class ever, a 56 percent increase over the previous year. The opening of Avila Hall also brings more students living on campus than ever before, exposing them to a transformational learning and living environment that reflects the values of our founding Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

Of course, the success of the University lives and breathes on the quality of education it provides students, and what better way to gauge Avila's success than by taking a look at educators Avila has produced. Educators like Beth Heide '95, featured in our cover story, who in two short years has taken Center High School, in the heart of urban Kansas City, and transformed it – largely through sheer force of an iron will – into one of the highest-achieving academic institutions in the Midwest. Beth is just one of countless alumni from Avila's School of Education making differences in the lives of students.

You will also read about our transformational learning environment – one which has long been experience-based and positions our students to make a difference in their world. Efforts are underway to incorporate new teaching techniques and state-of-the-art technologies for an enhanced interactive learning environment.

These opportunities are possible because of you and the support of all members of the Avila family—alumni, friends, faculty and staff. Together, we are helping students, almost half of which are first-generation college students, achieve their dreams of a college education. Your support creates an educational experience that truly makes a difference in a student's life, and the lives of others.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ronald A. Slepitzka'.

Ronald A. Slepitzka, Ph.D., CSJA

President

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Avila President

Ronald A. Slepitsa, Ph.D., CSJA

Vice President for Advancement and External Relations

Angie Heer, CFRE

Lead Writer

Bob Luder

Contributing Writers

Robin Rowland

Contributing Photographers

Nicole Burkhart

Bob Luder

Susan Randolph, MBA '05

Designer

Michael Kight, MA

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Contact Us!

Readers may send comments, story ideas or letters to:

Accent

Avila University
11901 Wornall Road
Kansas City, Missouri 64145
816.501.2422
Angela.Heer@avila.edu

Avila University

816.942.8400

Advancement

816.501.2450

Alumni Relations

816.501.3780

Athletics

816.501.3634

Bookstore

816.501.3630

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ON THE Cover

Beth Heide '95

As principal, Beth continues to transform students' lives at Center High School.

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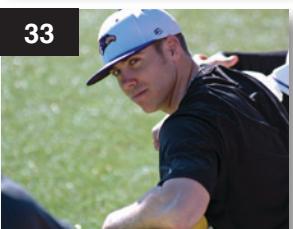
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BREAKING RECORDS: BY THE NUMBERS

10

— Percentage increase in Avila University's enrollment of full-time undergraduate students compared with a year ago in fall 2011. It also was a 7.5 percent increase over the previous best fall enrollment, which occurred in 2008.



56

— Percentage increase in the University's number of first-year students, which includes true freshmen and transfer students. Avila enrolled about 210 first-year students this year, compared with about 130 in fall 2011. The first-year class broke a record of its own in August when it volunteered at Harvesters, Kansas City's food bank, serving as its largest volunteer group ever.



\$22

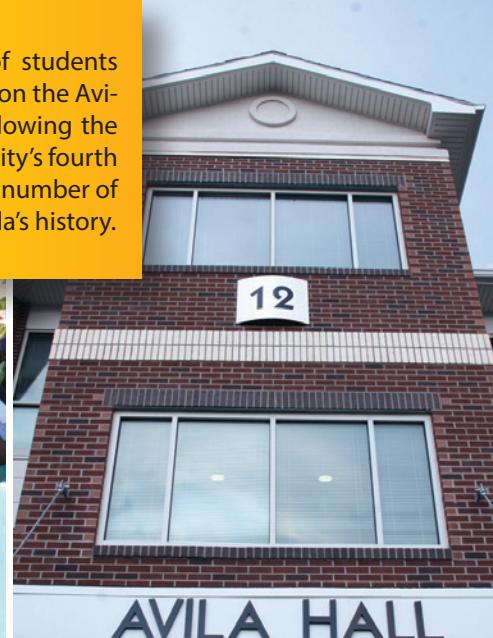
million — Amount of Avila's seven-year capital improvements plan that has already allowed for the construction of Avila Hall, the renovation of the student dining facility in Marian Center and refurbishment and remodeling of the anatomy and physiology lab in O'Rielly Hall, among other projects.





390

— Number of students who now live on the Avila campus following the opening of Avila Hall, the University's fourth residence hall. That is the largest number of students living on campus in Avila's history.



104

— The number of beds in Avila Hall's 21-suite dormitory. The hall has also been a hit with new residents. Alison Jones, a sophomore nursing student from Omaha, Neb., said the suite design, which contains 4-5 individual rooms with an adjacent commons area and bathroom, made for the perfect combination of privacy and community. "I like that we have our own bedroom, but we're also able to live with our friends in one big room," Jones said.



215

— The number of full-time faculty and staff that makes it all possible by providing students a high-quality, values-based education and complete, well-rounded campus experience.





Members of the Avila University Advancement committee helped Jessie Fuller Clark celebrate receiving the 2012 Medal of Honor during the annual donor barbecue May 17. Pictured, left to right, are: Robert Hartsook, JD, Ed.D.; Virginia Coppinger; Steven Clark; Jessie Fuller Clark; Belinda Troxler '88; Jeanne Hamilton Olofson '92, '94, '11; and Mark Thompson.

Seasoned fundraiser receives 2012 Medal of Honor

Jessie Fuller Clark, CFRE, CSJA, senior director of Advancement since 2003, was bestowed the University's 2012 Medal of Honor by President Ron Slepitzka, Ph.D., and Board of Trustee members Robert F. Hartsook, JD, EdD and Jeanne Hamilton Olofson '92, '94, '11 in a surprise ceremony during the annual donor barbecue held May 17 in Avila's athletic pavilion.

In presenting the award, given to someone who has made significant contributions to Avila, exemplified an attitude of support and loyalty and embodied the mission of the University, Slepitzka spoke of Fuller Clark's devotion to the values of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in all she does.

"Few are such strong or effective advocates as Jessie," Slepitzka said. "Few hold our mission more dear. Few have had a greater impact on the University at such a key moment in our history. She's

not only served Avila, but she has also served the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and St. Joseph Medical Center. She has been, and continues to be, strong in her support of the CSJ mission and ministry in Kansas City."

During her time at Avila, Fuller Clark has helped raise more than \$20.6 million to enhance Avila's academic, physical and spiritual environment. She has been instrumental in securing some of the largest philanthropic gifts in school history, including two J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation challenge grants totaling \$1.9 million that helped build Jeanne Collins Thompson Hall and the athletic pavilion, as well as renovate Marian Dining Hall and the anatomy and physiology lab in O'Rielly Hall.

Fuller Clark also has tremendously grown Avila's planned giving program and recognition of planned gift and endowed scholarship donors through

the Heritage Society, more than doubling the number of members over her nine years.

"Jessie is one of the best of the best," said Olofson, one of Fuller Clark's closest friends. "She embodies all the attributes of the Sisters of St. Joseph whose mission we work to fulfill every day. She has been truly an unsung hero."

"Few institutions are blessed to have such a dedicated philanthropic manager and leader as Avila has in Jessie Fuller," said Hartsook, chairman, Hartsook Companies and Hartsook Institutes for Fundraising. "For Jessie, a heartfelt thanks and continued friendship would be all she would ask as recognition, but she is deserving of more, much more."

After receiving the award, Fuller commented, "I am surprised and thrilled. I am honored to be able to work alongside Avila alumni, friends, staff and faculty. Avila will be in my heart forever." ▀

Faculty accomplishments

The last year was a typically busy one for Avila University's faculty, who not only worked tirelessly to make Avila one of the top private universities in the Midwest, but accomplished many great things outside the classroom as well.



For **Nancy Cervetti, Ph.D.**, professor of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, it was a year in which Cervetti saw not one, but two, major projects come to fruition. Her biography of 19th-century neurologist/writer S. Weir Mitchell was published by the esteemed Penn State University Press. And, "The Darwin Project," a play Cervetti co-wrote with former Avila staff

member and alum Jeremy Lillig '03, was performed at the brand new Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City, Mo. on Oct. 14, 2011.

"It sold out, which was really surprising to me," Cervetti said. "It was a really incredible project to work on."

As was the book on Mitchell, a controversial historic figure for his theories and therapies combating hysteria in women.

"I'm still very nervous about it, because I do take on women's stereotypes of what's been accepted," Cervetti said.

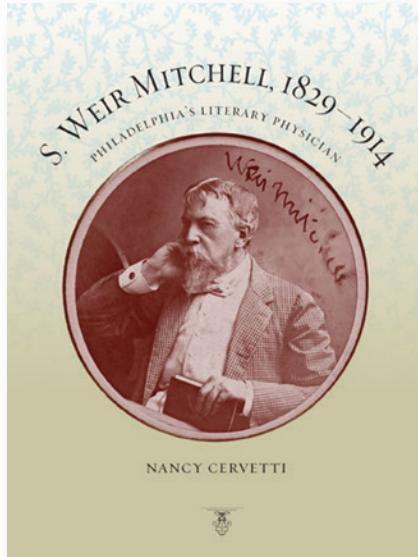
The book is available in hardback on the Penn State Press Web site.

"I worked for 15 years on this biography," she said. "A lot of my life is in this book."

Cervetti's was just one of a litany of accomplishments by Avila faculty over the last year. Others include:

Marci Aylward, MFA, associate professor of art and design and curator of Thornhill Art Gallery, had her work exhibited at an international invitational exhibit and conference in Ho Chi Ming City, Vietnam in June 2012.

Carol Coburn, Ph.D., professor of women's studies and religious studies, and **Steve Iliff, Ph.D.**, dean of the School of Professional Studies and associate professor of communication, traveled on a peacekeeping mission to Israel and Palestine in May



and June 2012 in an effort to try and bring change to the living and human rights conditions of Palestinians. They made the trip as part of a delegation with Christian Peacemaker Teams.

Wendy Donnell, Ph.D., assistant professor for literacy in the School of Education, was part of a research delegation on a study of the Cuban National Literacy Campaign in its 50th year in Havana, Cuba in October 2011.

Susan Fetsch, Ph.D., dean of the School of Nursing, was appointed to the Standards Review Task Force on the Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education, which she has served on since 1998.

Karin Gastreich, Ph.D., assistant professor of biology, has written several works, most notably the *Chronicles of Eolyn*, a fantasy novel about a woman who inherits a tradition of magic that is forbidden to women in her world. Gastreich and her work was selected for

inclusion in the Andrews Forest Writer's Residency in spring 2011 and as of this past spring, had more than 14,000 views.

Charlene Gould, Ph.D., dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, was one of 20 individuals selected for participation in the National Senior Leadership Academy sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges.

Dotty Hamilton, Ph.D., dean of the School of Visual and Communication Arts, presented her paper titled, "Appetite and Aroma: Visual Imagery and the Perception of Taste and Smell in Contemporary Korean Film" at an international conference in Hungary.

Marcia Pasqualini, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology and chair of psychology, led a poster presentation with four students entitled "Public Speaking Anxiety Reflects Lower Heart Rate Variability and Self-Esteem" at the Association for Psychological Science convention in Chicago in May 2012.

Robert Powell, Ph.D., professor of biology, had a new species of lizard, an *Anguilla* bank skink, named after him – *Spondylurus powelli*.

Jordan Wagge, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology, was part of three presentations at the 24th annual convention for the Association for Psychological Science in Chicago in May 2012. □



Nancy H. Blattner, Ph.D.



Brad Hunt



David D. Kerr '76

Avila welcomes three trustees to board

Nancy Blattner, Brad Hunt and David Kerr '76 are the newest members of Avila University's Board of Trustees, the University announced in May.

They become part of a group which makes policy and sets strategic direction for the University.

Blattner is the first lay president in the 70-year history of Caldwell College, a Catholic liberal arts college in Caldwell, N.J. Before that, she was vice president and dean for academic affairs at Fontbonne University in St. Louis. She holds a bachelor of science in secondary education/English, a master of arts in English from Southeast Missouri State University and a Ph.D. in educational psychology from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale.

"I am honored to have been invited by President Ron Slepitzka to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees at Avila University," Blattner said. "During my five years at Fontbonne University, an institution also sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, I came to embrace the mission and charism of the CSJs and learned about the many strengths of Avila University from its president and through interactions with the provost, S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D. I consider my membership on this board as a wonderful opportunity to contribute in another way to Catholic higher education while at the same time acknowledging my commitment to the CSJs and their mission."

Hunt is a director in the Kansas City PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC office, with more than 15 years of technology related experience in a wide range of capacities. He has extensive experience in advanced wireless, wire line and optical technologies. He also was finance director for the Kansas City division of Lucent Technologies, responsible for all financial aspects of the \$1.2 billion business. He earned a bachelor of science in ac-

counting from Colorado University and a master's in business administration from the University of Arkansas.

"It is an honor to be part of such a dynamic board that facilitates change through a belief in continuous improvement," Hunt said. "It is my hope and expectation that we will collectively establish the direction of the University that will ensure its continued success for the next 100 years."

Kerr, a well-known student on campus in the 1970s, came to Avila University to play basketball for Avalanche coach Bill Waris. He earned bachelor's degrees in both economics and business administration from Avila in 1976. He joined AT&T in 1979 and served as president of AT&T Kansas from 2003-07, where he was responsible for all regulatory, governmental and external affairs activities in the state. In 2007, he was appointed secretary of the Kansas Department of Commerce by then-Governor Kathleen Sebelius and two years later left to serve as Missouri's director of economic development under Governor Jay Nixon.

"While a student, Avila University prepared and provided me with the tools necessary to successfully compete in the challenging and ever-changing global job market," Kerr said. "I appreciate the opportunity to serve on Avila's Board of Trustees and share my experience in both the private and public sectors to assist Avila students in preparation for their future careers."

"We couldn't be more thrilled to have Nancy Blattner, David Kerr and Brad Hunt join Avila University's Board of Trustees," said Ron Slepitzka, Ph.D., Avila president. "The dedication to excellence they show in both their personal and professional lives makes them a perfect fit for our board. We look forward to their input and many years of fruitful work together on behalf of the University." ▀



Jim Gegg accepts a board proclamation for his 13 years of service to Avila at the University's Board of Trustees meeting in May 2012.

Honoring Jim Gegg

Before retiring from Avila University's Board of Trustees last spring, Jim Gegg served 13 years helping support and promote Avila as a member of the Finance committee. He offered insight and counsel to improve the University's institutional quality and overall effectiveness.

A past chair of the Board, Gegg, a certified public accountant, continually provided guidance to the University with his knowledge as an administrator and accounting professional as Avila embarked on and completed its most successful capital campaign to date. He also presided over a successful re-accreditation process.

Avila University wishes to thank Jim for his decade-plus commitment, friendship and service to the University and its students, faculty, staff and friends.

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- Belinda Troxler '88**
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- Faith Wilson, Ph.D.**



Avila leads the way with flipped learning

Although the field of education changes with the discovery of innovative teaching methods and strategies, Avila University has always been dedicated to transformational learning for its students.

"Transformational learning reflects what happens to a student," said S. Marie Joan Harris, CSJ, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs. "Through the combination of faculty sharing knowledge and a student's interaction with that knowledge, the student becomes transformed in understanding the ability to become a learner and become an expert in that area."

One such transformation Avila has been involved with for many years is reverse instruction or flipped learning.

Flipped learning has transformed schools across the U.S. Instead of students stepping into a classroom with little-to-no knowledge of subject matter and listening to a professor lecture, that part of the learning process is completed beforehand, and class time is used to have students physically and practically work on tasks involved with the material ... like designing an event for local companies.

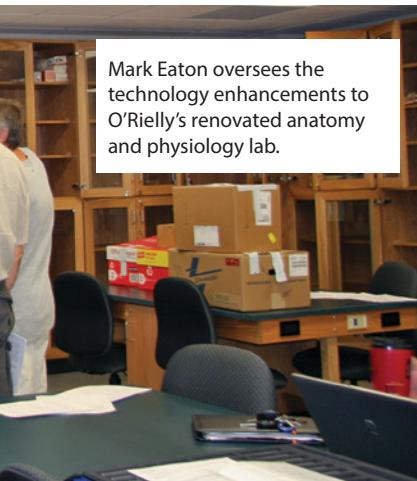
As a popular new book on flipped learning states, this method of teaching is the way to "reach every student in every classroom every day." Avila has been at the forefront of this revolutionary process in education.

"Knowledge is escalating at unbelievable rates," Harris said. "We have to teach students to be life-long learners."

This fall, two Avila faculty members are embarking on a project to educate faculty in the latest technologies designed to support flipped learning.

Mark Eaton, Ph.D., associate vice president of instructional technology, and Andria Stokes, Ph.D., director of Avila's Center for Transformational Learning and an assistant professor in the School of Education, think they're onto something that is extremely effective when it comes to educating students in the 21st century and beyond.

"The intent of flipped instruction is to create a place where students are independent learners and take time to digest new content," Stokes said. "Once students arrive in class, the faculty member can then increase deeper thinking about the topic by



having students apply and synthesize the information.

"Basically, we learn by doing."

As Avila's resident expert in learning technology, it only makes sense that Eaton is interested in that aspect of flip instruction and has spent most of his time in this project figuring out ways to use today's complex technologies to maximize efficiencies and impact.

"One way to use flipped instruction is to immediately start with a simulation," Eaton said. "The instructor acts as a consultant, providing guidance. Technology allows us to try this concept in a variety of unique ways."

"We can expose students not only to a full range of available tools, but some of the new tools on the horizon."

The key, according to Avila President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA, is engaging students and then keeping them engaged.

"They cannot be passive recipients of information – information that's half-life is growing shorter and shorter – and expect to gain something valuable," he said. "The more we do this, the more powerful the learning and the more relevant it is to the student."

Stokes showed on her iPad where she could connect audio and video into a lesson plan that students could connect with at home, then come to class with a leg up on the material, ready to assimilate that information in practical terms. This is part of a concept known as lecture capture technology, which takes computer hardware and software that facilitates the ability of faculty to combine audio and video, allowing lectures to be viewed from anywhere by anyone with a mobile device.

Eaton said the first use of this technological solution at Avila is being used in the newly renovated anatomy and physiology lab in O'Reilly Hall, thanks

in part to a grant from the McGee Foundation.

It's this kind of technology, Stokes and Eaton said, that can cut time spent designing course material from months to days, even hours.

"It's teaching in a dynamic way," Eaton said. "And, it offers a lot of exciting new opportunities for knowledge retention. When learning involves action and actually putting content to practical application, retention of that content is much higher." □

Open House at Homecoming Saturday, Oct. 13 • 4:00 pm

Join us at this year's Homecoming and see these classroom renovations in person as well as the other changes across campus!

Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.

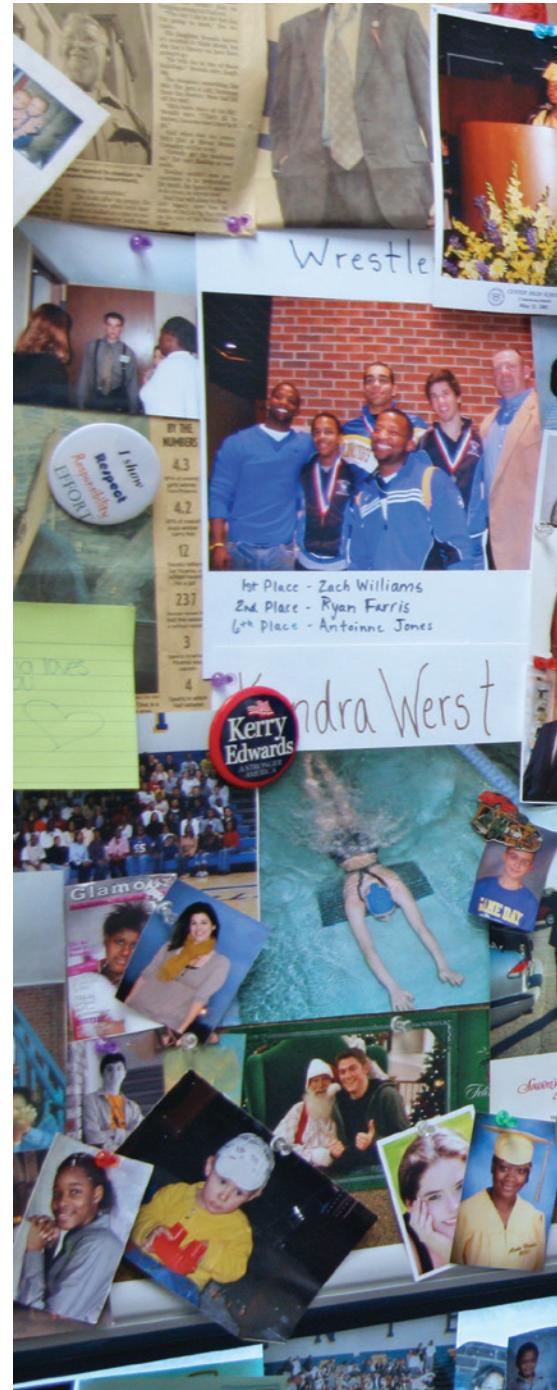
— Eleanor Roosevelt

Making the Grade

Avila helped ignite a passion in Beth Heide for educating and helping youth that shines through as principal at urban Kansas City high school

The quote above by the former First Lady, typed on a simple sheet of plain white paper and taped to a front window inside the principal's office at Center High School, serves as a sentry to all who enter. Despite her slight stature, warm eyes and embracing smile, the occupant of this space means business ... especially when it comes to caring for the 600 students who grace the halls at Center High School.

Beth Heide '95 is full of ideas and is always willing to discuss more. It's how she's taken a small school in the southern urban core of Kansas City, Mo. and created one of the greatest success stories in secondary education in the Midwest, perhaps even the country. Center High was the only urban school in Missouri – one of only eight schools statewide – to receive the Gold Star, the highest achievement award a school can receive. It also was nominated as a National Blue Ribbon School, which recognizes public and non-public schools with high-achieving students throughout the U.S.



"We've had a lot of pieces fall in place," said Heide, who began her third school year as principal at Center this fall.

"There have been a lot of great people involved with a great vision. And, that vision is one of high expectations and a high degree of caring and involvement."

When Heide speaks about her school and the achievements of its students, it doesn't seem like words rolling off the tongue as much as a force of nature. Her passion for Center and its students



– more than 70 percent who are in free or reduced-cost lunch programs because they come from low-income homes – doesn't seep through her pores so much as it jumps out and gives the listener a big hug.

"Beth's commitment to and passion for teaching and learning has been contagious among her staff," said Robert Bartman, superintendent for the Center School District. "Her leadership style

reflects compassion and empathy for all and demands high expectations for student behavior and academic performance."

It's the kind of passion that allows the reserved-yet-steely Heide to strike the delicate balance of "firm, but fair" that the vast majority of her students respond to.

"For us, it's not that we have the highest test scores in the state," she said.

"It's that we have the most improved test scores, and that's what we're really proud of around here."

"You have to have really clear expectations for students. We're really strict, but we don't want to be a jail. We just have high expectations and standards. People can rise to those expectations if they're clearly set out."

It's hard to believe that when Heide graduated from Avila University in the



Center High School Principal Beth Heide '95 stands in the school's library, which is stacked with computer terminals and much more of the modern educational technologies available today.

spring of 1995, having completed a degree in history with an emphasis in secondary education, she wasn't sure whether she'd go into education. A native of Denver, she had started her college career at Colorado State University and then transferred to Metropolitan State College in Denver before a friend convinced her to travel 600-plus miles east and give Avila a try.

Coming in as a sophomore, she said she quickly fell in love with the intimate surroundings, small class sizes and student/professor relationships that Avila had to offer. She quickly immersed herself not only in her classes, but in student life, serving as an ambassador, student senator and on the University's faith and leadership council. She met then-Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan and was on the Avila mock trial team which placed 17th in a national competition.

Heide even traveled with an Avila contingent to Washington D.C. and attended a speech by then-Vice President Al Gore.

"Avila was really about finding out who you are," she said. "It was so much about teaching and helping you learn."

Heide received Avila's Medal of Honor for teaching excellence and was the University's student teacher of the year as a senior in 1995. It's also where she met her husband, David, also a '95 graduate and sociology major.

Upon graduation, she was thinking about attending law school. But cost, and falling deeper into debt with college loans, was a consideration, one she ultimately chose not to undertake.

When she did decide on education, she said her experiences at Avila dictated that she do something extraordinary.

"I never wanted to be a normal educator," Heide said. "I wanted to make a difference, come to an urban setting and turn things around."

Center is the only school Heide has known as an educator. While still at Avila, she performed her student teaching and practicum there and was hired fulltime as a teacher upon graduation. She taught 10 years before becoming an assistant principal for four years. She was promoted to principal more than two years ago.

"Under her leadership, Center High School has accelerated its journey from good to great," Bartman said.

Heide believes in a team approach when it comes to educating students at Center. She's constantly enlisting the help of committees on everything from aligning curriculum to professional development to raising support to buy students such necessities as backpacks, textbooks, or even professional clothing for job interviews.

"It's like a puzzle ... putting the pieces together," she said. "How do we provide our more than 70 percent free and

"The students all know I care about them and will do anything for them within reason. We have to prepare them to compete. We have to give them the tools they need to get out of poverty. The only way I know how to do that is through education."

reduced lunch student population with the resources they need to be competitive in today's workforce?"

Keeping up with the latest technology is paramount, and Heide has made sure all of Center's classrooms are well-equipped. Labs and computers are plentiful, and iPads are becoming more and more prevalent. Every classroom has a SMART Board.

"We're trying to become a data-driven school," Heide said. "We have a data team that meets every other week looking at scores."

Heide said Center also hosts periodic career fairs with professional recruiters. She said she wants every one of the school's students to set foot on at least one college campus before they graduate.

And yet, in the end, Heide said she knows educating students all comes back to the basic needs – security, self-esteem, a feeling that you matter to someone out there.

"The students all know I care about them and will do anything for them within reason," she said. "We have to prepare them to compete. We have to give them the tools they need to get out of poverty.

"The only way I know how to do that is through education."

Beyond improved test scores and state awards and recognition, proof of Center's success through Heide's leadership is most tangible when talking with her former students. During a recent stroll around the school grounds, Heide ran into a small group of former Center High School Yellowjackets student-athletes.

Jay Carter, who attends the University of Central Missouri, said Heide always reminded him of her favorite catch phrase, one which they tag "The Three R's": "Always be respectful, be responsible, be ready to learn."

"She always made sure we were having a good day," said James Tillman, a recent Center graduate who also attends UCM. "She

was involved. She was involved with us every day. She helped me fill out my ACT registration and all the paperwork to get into college."

Heide said, "You have to provide hope for these kids. You have to show them, it's not about the color of your skin or how much money you have. It's what do you want to be and how do I help you get there."

These are values that, she said, were instilled during her time at Avila.

"Avila taught me how to be a phenomenal teacher," Heide said. "It gave me the rigor, skills and background not only to teach, but understand the diversity of learners. I learned that we need to meet the needs of kids and find out how to move them toward their individual pathways."

She gives much of the credit for her leadership abilities to the teachings of Sherry Schirmer, Ph.D., a former professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and S. Martha Smith, CSJ, who taught history at Avila.

"Dr. Sherry Schirmer was the embodiment of a phenomenal teacher," she said. "S. Martha was incredible about expecting excellence."

All of which Heide now expects of herself. □



Education alums making impacts in their fields

Like most everything else during this age of technology, the face of education is constantly changing and at a rapid pace. At times, it seems a gargantuan task just to keep up with technological breakthroughs and remain on the cutting edge as U.S. educators – and those around the world – prepare students for an equally cutting edge 21st century workforce.

All the while, graduates of Avila University who became educators have become innovators in their own right – from Beth Heide (see cover story), principal at Center High School in urban Kansas City, Mo., to hundreds of Avila-educated school teachers, administrators, even government representatives around the country, constantly striving to provide students with the latest learning techniques and curricula.

Following are just a few shining examples:



Susanne Mitko '98 was named the state of Missouri's Teacher of the Year, 11 years after graduating from Avila with a master of arts in education.

Mitko is a big believer in a team approach to education and has always been quick to credit those educators working around her. When it comes to learning, she said, it's important to pick up on each individual student's strengths and weaknesses.

"Avila's program was incredible, and it completely changed the way I teach," she said. "Instead of repeating concepts at a slower pace to students who weren't comprehending, I began to see how I can reach each of my students no matter their strengths or learning styles.

"I'm such a better teacher due to my time and degree from Avila."



Representative Greg Smith '06, '10 has had the unique advantage of looking at education from a couple different vantage points since he received his bachelor of science in history and master's in education at Avila. He teaches social studies at Shawnee Mission West High School in Overland Park, Kan. He's also serving his first term in the Kansas House of Representatives and is running for the Kansas Senate.

"When I was in high school, the computer was an archaic thing where you punched cards," Smith said with a chuckle. "Certainly, the access to computers, and the skill levels of students on those computers, has changed things drastically over the last several years."

Smith said a system is coming on line at his school where students can actually text in answers on a test.

"It's a new thing," he said. "It's not heavily adopted yet, but it probably will happen."

With state governments facing budget crunches, Smith said the priority has been to look for ways to more efficiently spend on education.

"The biggest challenge for states when it comes to education is finding the right financial formula," he said. "The current system picks winners and losers."

There's yet another project, this one nearest to Smith's heart, that has a more indirect impact on conventional education. Smith also is president of Kelsey's Army, a foundation named for his daughter, who was kidnapped and murdered in 2007. The foundation sponsors safety awareness for women 13-24 and works to end violence toward children. Anyone interested in helping the foundation can visit www.kelseysarmy.org.



Linda Wiersma '97, '01 remains close to her Avila roots to this day, serving as a member of the School of Education's Teaching Excellence Team (TEXT). She accepted a position in the Paola (Kan.) School District a week before graduating in the spring of 1997 and has been there ever since. She currently is a fourth-grade teacher at Sunflower Elementary in Gardner, Kan. She also served on the Teacher of the Year Team in Kansas in 2011.

Wiersma received a grant last spring through the Library of Congress and over the summer attended a week-long in-service about using primary resources in the classroom, which included actual artifacts, diaries, letters, interviews, pictures and videos that reveal information about an event.

"When students get to experience history firsthand, it brings relevance and excitement to the process," she said.

She said she also obtained iPads for her students through her Kansas Teacher of the Year grant.

"As I traveled around the state of Kansas with the

Teacher of the Year team, we visited more than 20 universities," Wiersma said. "I never saw an educational department that offered more than I received from Avila. I often have colleagues ask me where I come up with my ideas. I always can trace my thinking back to the pedagogy I received from the instructors at Avila."



Jessica Edwards '10 was the Kansas Horizon Award winner for teaching excellence in 2012. She was working as a paraprofessional in the Blue Valley (Kan.) School District while working on her degree at Avila. She forged relationships that helped her join the Blue Valley faculty full-time as a high school communication arts teacher. Edwards said she also believes in collaboration among students, allowing students to be social and incorporating current tools such as social media.

"Avila taught me the importance of being a life-long learner in education, which I feel helps me every day in the classroom," Edwards said. ▀



Education grads finding jobs quickly, even in sluggish economy

The economic malaise in recent years has created high levels of anxiety for many college graduates. That doesn't appear to be the case for graduates of Avila University's School of Education, many of whom landed fulltime jobs just days following graduation last May.

Just a couple months ago, Alex Smedley '12 (right photo), then a senior education major, won the Outstanding Pre-Service Reading Teacher Award handed out by the Missouri State Council-International Reading Association.

Today, she is a fifth-grade teacher at M.E. Pearson Elementary School in Kansas City, Kan. She got the job in mid-June, less than a month after graduation.

"Having been a student at Avila, I feel so prepared to begin my career," she said. "I have a large variety of activities and strategies to use in my classroom that I learned over the past four years. I also know if I need anything from my former professors that I can email or call them, and they are more than willing to help me out."

Alex Jung '12 (left photo) was planning on being a graduate assistant for the Avila women's soccer team this fall when she received a call from the principal at Raytown High School in Raytown, Mo. shortly after graduation. It just so happened that the head of the math department at Raytown, Melanie Dowell, also was an adjunct professor at Avila and had been impressed by Jung's work in one of her classes. Dowell, along with another Avila professor, Kathleen Roy, both recommended Jung highly to the Raytown principal, and Jung is now teaching Algebra I and Algebra II at the school.

"The Avila School of Education does a great job of incorporating a lot of clinical aspects to the program, which really puts you out in the school districts," Jung said. "This helps in putting yourself out there as a face and not just a name on an application." ▀



Social Work students get up-close look at prison life

"Be sure to pull that gate closed behind you, until you hear it latch," the prison official told the college student of the tall, chain-link fence with razor wire coiled around the top. When she did, and the loud clang rattled through the cool spring air, the group of 12 Avila University Social Work students couldn't help but join in a collective cringe.

This was for real.

The contingent, members of professor Francis Origanti's Human Behavior in the Social Environment class and juniors in the University's social work program, visited the Topeka Women's Correctional Facility the morning of April 18 with the purpose of gaining knowledge of the prison environment, a few of the details of prison life and, perhaps most important to their educational paths, the psyche of some of the prisoners currently detained at the facility.

"It's exposure to a different field setting for practice," Origanti, Ph.D., said. "This exposes students to a type of person

they don't get exposed to very often. It addresses human behavior and how that behavior manifests itself in a confined environment."

The students got to see quite a lot during their two-hour stay at the facility, which contains three distinct cell blocks - one maximum security, one medium and one minimum. After moving through security much like an airport's at the entrance, the group walked past the medium-security building, the oldest on the property, built in 1927.

They passed by the recreation yard, complete with a basketball court and fenced-in area that looked like dog pens but was a recreational area for "segregated" inmates. They then stepped into the newer building which housed the maximum-security cell blocks. Inside were 118 inmates dressed in different colored tops and pants which resembled hospital scrubs. It was laundry and bedding exchange day so the area buzzed with activity, especially in the cell block commons areas, which con-

tained small circular tables for eating and one small TV.

The students passed by a hair salon for the inmates, mental health facilities, family visiting areas, even a lab where dentures are made – to replace all the teeth lost from inmates' use of methamphetamine.

But the most interesting part of the trip was saved for last. The students stepped into a small meeting room and sat down to listen to the stories of three inmates. Tabitha was a college-educated teacher who got wrapped up in an abusive relationship and was sentenced to 25 years to life on a child sexual abuse charge. Bo and Crystal also were raised in broken homes and drug abuse led to lives of robbery and prostitution.

The students sat rapt in attention as the ladies told their sordid and cautionary stories, all of which had a central theme – they made poor choices.

"It was all very interesting," said student Maria Bello. "I loved that we got to go

Business students distinguish themselves among world's best

There aren't many college students who can consider themselves among the world's best at anything. But two Avila University business students can.

A pair of students in Professor Daniel George's business policy class, Wathiq Alamro and Yanling Jiang, earned a global top 100 ranking for their company's performance in the Business Strategy Game (BSG), which is a fantasy business simulation game that measures performance in areas ranging from investment and capital to plant production and payroll.

Alamro, a senior from Saudi Arabia, and Jiang, a graduate student from China, finished in a tie for 44th place in BSG's Industry 13, which involved the operation of a fictitious athletic footwear company.

"It's quite impressive for a school our size to earn this high a ranking," said George, Ph.D., who added that the BSG was used by 45,000 students in 2,500 classes at nearly 500 universities/colleges in 35 countries. "It shows an ability on the students' part to process a lot of information. The game spits out a lot of reports, not only on your own performance, but on your competitors."

"Wathiq and Yanling did quite well. They had their heart and soul into it from the very beginning."

George said he's had students competing in BSG, which is sponsored by global publishing giant McGraw-Hill, since 1992 and, in that time, has had "two or three" other teams earn top 100 rankings.

Students who play the game are assigned to manage a fictional company. George said the athletic shoe company his students were charged with were allotted a \$238 million net worth, with profits of \$25 million. They were required to make decisions in 9-10 different areas, including factory capacities, inventory, product quality and salary structure.

The teams were rated on the following criteria: earnings per share, return on average equity, stock price, bond rating and image rating. Alamro and Jiang not only ranked in a tie for 44th overall, but were 13th in earnings per share, 19th in return on average equity and an especially impressive seventh in stock price.

"The group did very well to finish top 100," George said, "but I have found that even those that don't finish there get a good feel for what it's like to run a company." ☐

A group of social work students took a trip last spring to the Topeka Women's Correctional Facility. Pictured from left to right are: Brittany Crabtree, Cheryl Vandruff, Courtney Gimlin, Laura Guber, Amy Wright, Kendra Hough, Samantha Smith, Quintin Headley, Heather Tice, Maria Bello, Anne Kwon, Maddy Gilmore, Francis Origanti, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the Department of Social Work.

when people were out and we got that interaction."

Fellow student Quintin Headley, the lone male among the students, said, "It was hard for me to see women in prison, because I know a lot of them are mothers. But it was very informative. It cleared up a lot of stuff I didn't know."

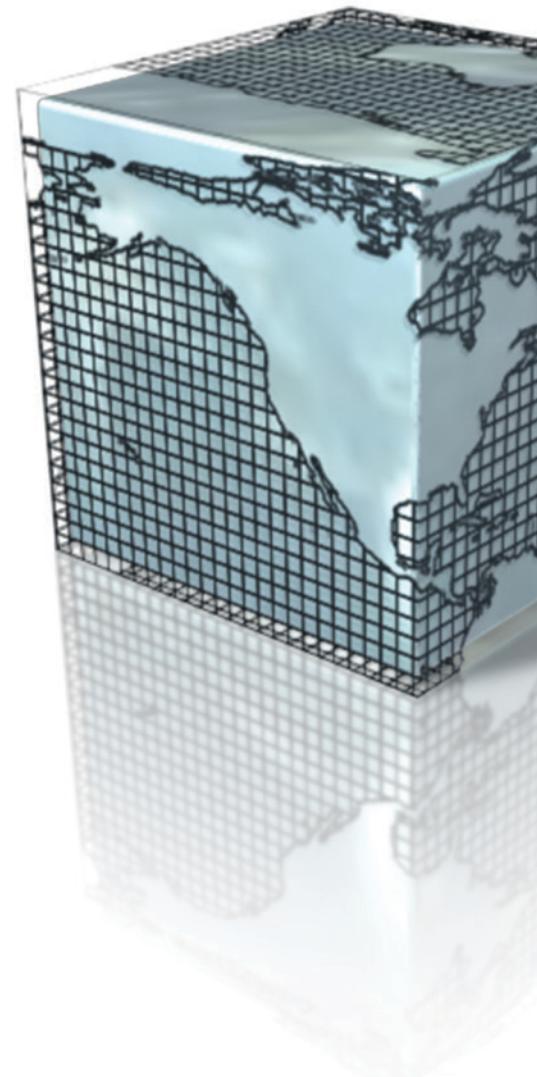
This was Laura Guber's second time to visit the Topeka Women's Correctional Facility. She said she found this trip more educational, largely because of the personal interaction with the inmates.

"This time, the inmates were more open with their stories.

"It was interesting to see how they reacted to us in their space."

For Origanti, it also was interesting to see how his students reacted to being in that environment.

"If any of these students ever want to work as a social worker in a prison system, is this something they think they can handle?" he asked. "Maybe trips like this help answer that." ☐





VISCOM students learn urban culture in the Windy City

"It's very different – reading and doing."

Dotty Hamilton, dean of Avila University's School of Visual and Communication Arts, prefers the doing.

That's where Hamilton's annual Urban Culture: Chicago five-day cultural and educational trip comes into play. Every May after graduation, she takes 20 or so students to Chicago for five days of absorbing the urban culture in every way imaginable.

"The objective is to study the impact of urban environments on society," said Hamilton, in her fourth year of taking students on this particular trip. "We look at everything from architecture, public transportation, green spaces, public art and cultural activities."

Hamilton said she had her students complete several readings about urban development before traveling to Chicago. The trip then allows them to experience first-hand what they've read to that point only seen on paper.

"It's the experiential learning component," Hamilton said. "A lot of our students have never used public transportation."

The students filled their time with a myriad of activities throughout the five days. They visited the Chicago Art Institute, the Contemporary Museum, the Chicago Culture Center and the Gene Siskel Film Center. Hamilton said two favorite activities were going to Buddy Guy's Legends to listen to blues music and a river cruise highlighting much of the city's architecture.

"The boat ride around the city was one of my favorite activities," said student Daniel Roso. "The boat tour allowed us to view the city from end to end, all from a new perspective. The differences and origins of all the downtown buildings are unique with different stories and structural differences. The skyline was beautiful, and it was also a fun, relaxing learning experience."

Many students recorded video blogs and slide shows of their experiences during the trip. They can be viewed at www.avila.edu/urban-culture.asp. □



Class lives Sisters' mission on trip to Guatemala



An eight-day student trip to Guatemala in May for the class Violence: Guatemala was about students observing and learning about a foreign culture, as well as performing service along the lines of the mission of the University and its founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

For Professor Nicole Esquibel, it was about even more.

"I looked at everything through the eyes of a documentary filmmaker," said Esquibel, an assistant professor in Avila's School of Visual and Communications Arts, a documentarian, and one of the leaders of the 10-student contingent along with colleague Ken Parsons, Ph.D. "From my standpoint as a documentarian, it was about getting testimony. That's how the Guatemalan people repair their lives, by telling their stories.

"These stories bring in the philosophical and ethical notions of violence, so it seemed natural that Dr. Parsons and I would take an interdisciplinary approach to the course."

Parsons, assistant professor of philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, said, "We dealt with the subject matter from both a conceptual level and a visual level, taking both theoretical and practical concerns

into account. My assumption is that this approach is not strictly conceptual, but non-conceptual in its representation of violence and genocide. It is not primarily concerned with imparting understanding but rather experience, which may itself lead to greater understanding."

Throughout the eight days, which took place May 18-26, Esquibel, Parsons and the students saw evidence of – and listened to stories about – the ravages of a civil war in the small, Central American country that lasted from 1960-96 and left thousands dead or displaced from their homes.

Esquibel said the Avila contingent flew into Guatemala City, the nation's capital and most populous city with more than 14 million inhabitants. They spent three nights in a local seminary and were thoroughly debriefed about what was ahead of them before traveling out to more remote areas.

Their first destination was Santiago Atitlan, where they met with an organization called ANADESA, a women's collective working for fair trade for women in the community. They then spent two days in Panabaj, performed service for the people there and talked with people about the effects of the war and the more recent ravages from Hurricane Stan, which hit in October, 2005.

"We talked to women whose husbands were killed or lost in the war," Esquibel said. "But, we learned that violence there is not only cultural, but also by nature."



It was in San Felipe where the students performed most of their service learning work. They trekked up mountainsides with supplies and built chicken coops as well as provided materials for candle and soap making.

As Esquibel said, living conditions were sparse at best.

"Students often slept on floors in the same one-room home of our families, and many days our meals consisted of beans and tortillas," she said. "But the host families were gracious and welcoming, and strong bonds were formed between the students and the Guatemalan people."

A few days later, the group returned to Guatemala City and flew home, exhausted but exhilarated by the work accomplished and the knowledge gained.

Esquibel said there undoubtedly would be future service learning excursions to Guatemala.

"I think it changed these students' lives," she said. "It's not an easy trip."

"But, this trip is completely in line with the mission of the University." ☮





Music professor wins prestigious London award

Listening to Suzanne Hendrix speak for a few seconds quickly tips the listener to the unique quality of her voice. It's low and calm, yet forceful. It's evident that, at any time of her choosing, she could unleash a power and range that could shatter glass ... or, call for the heavens to sing.

It's this voice that Hendrix, professional opera singer and adjunct voice instructor at Avila University the past three years, utilized to win a prestigious voice competition in New York City.

Hendrix was one of six winners of a \$10,000 George London Award, one of the country's most respected grant programs for young singers. According to a review of the competition in The New York Times, "contralto Suzanne Hendrix, 32, sang Erda's monologue from Wagner's 'Rheingold' with stark power."

Hendrix, who teaches studio voice at Avila, said there were about 300 applicants for the London awards. That initial group was pared to 24 to perform in a final concert. All of those 24 received \$500. Only six received the big prize.

Hendrix, who has a doctorate in musical arts from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, is a veteran of the opera. She's performed at the San Francisco Opera and performs frequently with the Wichita Grand Opera. She performed at the Santa Fe

Opera in Santa Fe, N.M. last summer. She said she competes about 5-6 times per year.

"Even if you don't win, you've at least sung in front of people who could hire you in the future," she said.

With all her travels, Hendrix said she's found a nice "home base" in Avila.

"Amity (Bryson, music professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences) and all the students have been great, just working with my hectic schedule," she said. "And, the more you sing, the more it helps you as a teacher, so I think it's been mutually beneficial."

According to Bryson, the latter statement couldn't be more true.

"The London auditions are second only to the Metropolitan auditions in prestige for opera singers," Bryson said. "I could not be more proud or excited for Suzanne. She has a phenomenal instrument and has represented herself and Avila marvelously. But what may be more important is her understanding of the voice and her ability to translate her talent into teachable moments for our students at Avila."

Hendrix said she's also found inspiration for her own music in working with her students at Avila.

"I have a student here who, with age, could have a voice just like mine," she said. "We have some really hard workers here. They really apply themselves." 

Viscom students win Hermes Creative Awards



Award winners Emilee Bickleman and James Chapman

Four Avila University communications students recently won three Hermes Creative Awards and two more received honorable mention, based on evaluations of judges with the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals (AMCP) in Dallas. Hermes Creative Awards recognized outstanding work in media while promoting the philanthropic nature of marketing and communications professionals.

Emilee Bickleman and James Chapman won a platinum Hermes Award in the category of Pro Bono for their work, *Proposal to the National Center for Safe Routes*. Trisha Simmons won a gold award in the Media Kit category for *Pink in the Rink*. And Lynette Galvan won a gold award in the Marketing Materials division for her work, *The Orange Army*. Valerie Reed and Charles McDonald received honorable mention for their entry, *The Communicators*.

The awards were designed to recognize creative professionals involved in the concept, writing and design of traditional and emerg-

ing media. There were more than 4,700 entries from throughout the U.S., Canada and several other countries that came from corporate marketing and communication departments, advertising agencies, public relations firms, design shops, production companies and freelancers.

The awards were administered and judged by the AMCP, an international organization consisting of several thousand marketing, communication, advertising, public relations, media production and freelance professionals.

Three of those communications students – Simmons, McDonald and Reed – also recently won Bronze Quill Awards, the highest award bestowed by the Kansas City International Association of Business Communicators. Professors Dotty Hamilton, Ph.D., J. Anthony Snograss, Ph.D. and Linda Strelluf attended the awards ceremony at the Uptown Theater in Kansas City and cheered on their award-winning students. □



THORNHILL GALLERY

& THE S. MARGARET REINHART COURTYARD
are located on the southeast corner of Avila's campus
near the Oak Street entrance.

Phillip Michael Hook

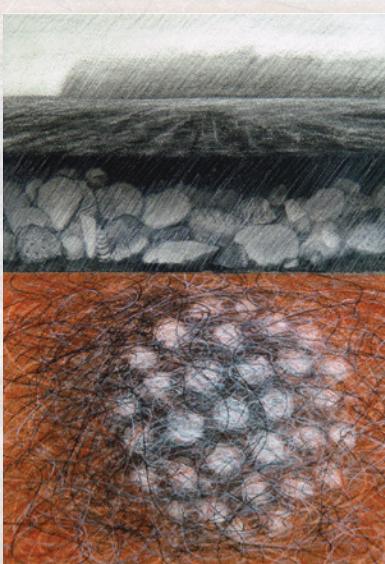
Beyond Appearances

OCTOBER 12 – DECEMBER 17, 2012

Opening Reception:
Friday, October 12
5–8 p.m.

Gallery Hours:
Monday–Thursday,
10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Friday, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
& by appointment

For information:
Marci Aylward
816.501.3653
Marci.Aylward@avila.edu





Introducing the Avila Alumni Board for 2013–2013

Special thanks to these Avila alums that have stepped up to take on leadership roles in the Alumni Association!

Sitting, L-R:

Donna Jungman '06, Rebecca Henry '05, '08, Carol Jean DeFeo '68, Debbie Cornelius '05, Molly Groebe '02

Standing, L-R:

Keith Richcreek '05, '08, Michele Sanders '85, Regina Maddux '09, Tamela Handie '93, '99, Margaret Henry '01, '11, Valerie Reed '10, Michael Stolberg '09.

Not pictured:

Whitney Beiler '08, John DeRoo '07, and Jeremy Lillig '03.

Welcome Herring as new Alumni and Donor Outreach Director

Vanessa Herring has joined Avila University's Advancement team as its director of alumni and donor outreach.

Herring has worked at the top levels of fund raising and development in two states over the past 11 years, most recently as annual giving manager at Harvesters – The Community Food Network in Kansas City, Mo., raising more than \$5 million annually and increasing annual donations by 18 percent from 2009-12. Before that, she served as development manager-sustainable funding with The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma.



"I am thrilled to be joining a team of hardworking, dedicated professionals committed to advancing Avila's tradition of excellence in education," Herring said. "The future is bright for Avila, because of its students, its leadership and its opportunity for growth."

Take a moment to welcome Vanessa to Avila by phone at 816-501-3780 or by email at vanessa.herring@avila.edu.

Alumni Events CALENDAR

October 12-14, 2012

Homecoming Weekend!

Homecoming is a time to connect with college friends, reminisce about days gone by, and reflect on the impact Avila had on your life. Come back to campus and join your fellow alums and friends of the University to make Homecoming 2012 the best one yet! Visit avila.edu/homecoming for more info.

November 1, 2012

Thirsty Thursday Alumni Happy Hour

Join the gang at Fuzzy's Taco Shop (10157 Wornall St., Kansas City, Mo.) after work from 5 to 7 pm to reconnect and reminisce with your college friends. It's a fun and casual time for all. Plus, appetizers are on Avila! (You cover your drinks.) Avila-themed giveaways to the first 10 alums there. No reservations necessary.

November 15 and December 12, 2012

Opening Doors Campus Tour & Luncheon

Marian Center • 12–1:30 p.m.

Are you curious about all the changes happening on Avila's campus? Do you want to hear see first-hand what is yet to come? Join us for an Opening Doors Tour and Luncheon with President Ron Slepitza, Ph.D., CSJA. RSVP at 816-501-3780 or alumni@avila.edu

January 26, 2013

Alumni Ski Night at Snow Creek

Join current Avila students and ride the Snow Creek slopes from 5 pm til 11 pm. Discounted tickets are available. Email alumni@avila.edu or call 816-501-3780 to reserve your tickets for a night of snow-packed fun in Weston, Mo.!

Find out about all the latest Alumni events scheduled by following us on social media. The Alumni Association is on Facebook and LinkedIn. Plus, you can sign up for Alumni-specific email alerts at avila.edu/alumni.



Homecoming Schedule

Thursday, October 11

7:15 – 8:00 pm Arts at Avila Opening Night Reception
8:00 pm Goppert Theatre Presents:
Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap"

Friday, October 12

10:30 – 11:00 am NEW! Alumni Meet and Greet Reception
11:00 am – 12 pm Avila Heritage Mass
12:15 – 1:30 pm Avila Heritage Luncheon
1:30 pm Walking Campus Tour and Virtual Campus Tour
5:00 – 7:30 pm EAGLE MADNESS
6:30 – 8:00 pm NEW! Class Reunions
(Contact the Alumni department to find out
if your class is organizing an on-campus reunion.)
6:30 – 8:00 pm Dinner Theatre
8:00 pm Goppert Theatre Presents:
Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap"

Saturday, October 13

9:00 – 11:00 am NEW! Jerusalem Farm Tour
10:00 am, 12:00 pm, 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm Volleyball Games
11:00 am – 12:30 pm Tailgate Party and BBQ
1:00 pm Homecoming Football Game
3:15 – 5:30 pm Alumni Choir Rehearsal
4:00 – 5:00 pm NEW! Psychology Lab Open House
4:00 – 5:00 pm NEW! Anatomy and Physiology Lab Open House
5:00 – 6:30 pm Alumni Reception
6:30 – 8:00 pm Dinner Theatre (Alumni Night)
8:00 pm Goppert Theatre Presents:
Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap"

Sunday, October 14

11:00 am – 12 pm Alumni Mass
12:15 pm Alumni Association
Recognition Ceremony and Luncheon
2:00 pm Goppert Theatre Presents:
Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap"

Reservations

See detailed information about these events, find out if your class is organizing an on-campus reunion and register for Homecoming activities at: avila.edu/homecoming

For more information on any Homecoming event, please e-mail alumni@avila.edu or call 816-501-3780.



Homecoming Honored Alumni 2012

We're proud of our alumni and want to share their accomplishments with you! Join us for Homecoming weekend and help us honor these deserving individuals:

Jeanne Rau-Flattery '92	Outstanding Alumnus Award
Amanda Campos Kies '08	Alumni Service Award
Lauren McCarthy '07	Alumni Service Award
Greg Smith '06, '10	Alumni Achievement Award
Denise Gaynor Rangel '98	Graduate Alumni Award
Chelsea Howlett-Weideman '09	Recent Alumni Award
Rose Marie Falco '47	Honored Class Alumni Award
Michele Kerwin '72	Honored Class Alumni Award
Keith Richcreek '05, '08	Avila Advantage Alumni Award
Sherri Enright '12	School of Business Alumni Award
Sheri Porter '97	School of Visual & Communication Arts Alumni Award
Bryan Salsgiver '10	School of Education Alumni Award
John Groff '74	School of Science & Health Alumni Award
Lynn Lehman Barrett '86	School of Nursing Alumni Award
Beth Van Horn Rice '87	College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Alumni Award



Alumni Cruise • Oct. 10-16, 2013



Pearls of the Mediterranean Oceania Cruises – Monte Carlo to Rome

Discover the upscale pearls of the Mediterranean aboard Oceania Cruises' newest vessel, the elegant Riviera. Explore Provence from Marseille, experience the French Riviera in St. Tropez, and enrich yourself among renowned Italian art and natural beauty in Portofino, Florence, Capri and Amalfi. For more detailed information regarding the trip, please visit www.avila.edu/alumnitravel or e-mail advancement@avila.edu

Save the Date for the

37th Annual Avila Steer Dinner

Saturday, February 16, 2013
6:00 p.m.

John and Nancy McCarthy, Honorary Chairpersons

Lauren McCarthy '07 and Ana Valdez '96, Event Co-Chairpersons

Marriott, Muehlbach Tower
200 W. 12th Street • Kansas City, Mo. 64105

Various sponsorships levels are available
ranging from \$25,000 to \$3,000.

Sponsor a table of 10 for \$2,000. Individual tickets: \$200.
NEW! Recent Alum Ticket Level: \$75 (for 2002-2012 graduates).

Proceeds from this special evening will benefit the Annual
Scholarship Fund for the students of Avila University.
For more information, contact Robin Rowland at 816-501-2450,
or email robin.rowland@avila.edu.

Class Alumni Partners Working to Reach You

On July 31, 16 Class Alumni Partners (CAP) came together to plan for Homecoming 2012 events. Our goal is to have record-breaking alumni attendance during this year's Homecoming weekend. Let's see which alumni class will have the highest attendance!

If you haven't heard from your CAP yet about Homecoming events, contact Vanessa Herring, Director of Alumni & Donor Outreach, at vanessa.herring@avila.edu or 816-501-3780.



L-R, sitting: Helen Hagel '62, Mary Elizabeth Heiman '47, Marybeth Swartz O'Malley '47, Mary Ann Hense '48, Connie John '61, S. Rose McLarney '62. L-R, standing: Anne Hess '62, Carmen Bisacca '89, Rose Ferguson '50, Carol Jean DeFeo '68, Mary Fern '58, Bobbi Courville '58, Marian Monnig '75, Patricia Wagner '82, Mary Flucke '54, Helen Swetala '72.

NEW! Recent Alumni Steer Dinner Ticket Price

If you graduated from Avila between 2002 and 2012 we'd like you to join the Steer Dinner event fun too! Take advantage of this new opportunity to purchase your event ticket at the discounted price of \$75. (Includes entry to the event, steak dinner, drinks, entertainment, and self-parking.) Even better – organize a table of recent alums to join you! Contact Vanessa Herring, Director of Alumni & Donor Outreach, at vanessa.herring@avila.edu or 816-501-3780, if you'd like to organize a table of your classmates. for the February 16, 2013, event.



From Steer Dinner 2012

Alumni Day at Worlds of Fun

Even with record-breaking temperatures in Kansas City, the Avila Alumni Day at Worlds of Fun sold out. Alums enjoyed a slight break in the high temps for the annual event. Yes, it was still pretty warm – but the heat didn't dampen anyone's fun! More than 100 alums and their family members enjoyed the amusement park and picnic. Make sure to watch for information in the spring about the 2013 World's of Fun Day. The discounted tickets sell fast!



Class Reunion for 1946-1949

Avila University's Alumni Department welcomed graduates from the classes of 1946-49 back to campus in June. About 30 women joined Avila President Ron Slepitz, PhD, CSJA, for a luncheon in Whitfield Center for an update on campus initiatives and to reminisce about their college days. Alums in attendance enjoyed poring over issues of The Teresian Newspaper from the 1940s, which were on display from the Avila archives. To view more photos from this special luncheon, visit: www.flickr.com/photos/avilaUniversity/sets/.

If you are an alumnus and would like more information about attending a reunion event or how you can help organize one on campus for your own class, please contact Avila's office of Alumni Relations at 816-501-3780.



Cinco de Mayo Happy Hour Welcomed May '12 Graduates

The May Thirsty Thursday Alumni Happy Hour proved to be a fun after-work event. Seasoned alums welcomed about 15 graduates (mostly from the baseball team it seemed!) to congratulate them on completing their degrees and officially becoming Eagle alums. Sign up for email or text alerts at avila.edu/alumni so you'll be the first to know about upcoming Happy Hour events – the more the merrier!

**Learn the latest and stay in touch
at avila.edu/alumni**

'47 Mary Elizabeth (Hessel) Heiman and her husband, Harold, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on October 13, 2011. They are the proud parents of five sons, five daughters-in-law, 12 grandchildren, one great grand-daughter and very soon two great grandsons. They have attended St. Thomas More Parish for 47+ years.

'47 Marybeth (Malsie) Swartz O'Malley is looking forward to seeing her college classmates at their 65th reunion during Avila's Homecoming Weekend on Oct. 12-14. Marybeth retired after 50 years of teaching math in the Kansas City, Missouri School District. She has five children (plus seven more from a second marriage). Together, she and her husband have "about" 20 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren. She now enjoys spending her free time playing bridge.

'48 Mary Ann (Miller) Hense married Dr. John I. Hense, retired dentist, in 1950. They have six children and 19 grandchildren, which include identical boy triplets (aged 14). She also has four great-grandchildren with another one on the way!

'50 Rose (Aylward) Ferguson is excited for her new title of great-grandmother! The new baby is scheduled to arrive in January 2013.

'54 Mary Anne (Gripka) Flucke stays busy with her six children and 13 grandchildren. She continues to work in nursing with Well Life. She recently vacationed with her children and grandchildren in St. Augustine, Fl.

'55 Rose Mary (Schultz) Hughes added a new great grandson, Declan Philip Marx, to their family in June. Her family now consists of eight children, 16 grandchildren, two foster grandchildren, three great grandchildren and two foster great grandchildren. She retired from nursing in 2001. She remains active with family and church activities, including volunteering as pastoral care volunteer at Bayfront Medical Center. She lives in St. Petersburg, Fla.

'58 Mary Eileen (O'Donnell) Fern is currently volunteering for many organizations in Kansas City. She is looking forward to seeing her classmates at Homecoming 2012!

'58 Bobbi (Hafner) Courville has been retired since 1998, having worked in the President's Office at Avila College for Dr. Larry Kramer. She loves retirement and spends her time golfing twice a week and volunteering at Seton Center on Mondays with many ladies to sort clothes for the Thrift Shop. They affectionately call themselves the "bag ladies."

We want to hear from you!

Job promotion, new baby, recent travels—let us know so we can let your classmates know, too!

Email your news to alumni@avila.edu or call 816-501-3780.

'58 Kathryn (Gordon) Murphy is excited to share her son's educational accomplishments. Her son, Michael Norman Murphy, graduated from St. Louis University with his undergraduate and MBA. He is an International Contract Specialist for Boeing Aircraft.

'61 Connie (Kassick) John and her husband recently downsized and enjoyed the help they received from family and friends in making the move. They continue to enjoy retirement, grand-parenting, and playing.

'62 Judy (Blossom) Montgomery and her husband celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Hilton Head, SC with their entire family.

'62 Anne (Breslin) Hess retired six years ago and has, since then, enjoyed her travels to Europe, South Africa, Thailand, China, and South America. The highlight of this past year has been a Disney Cruise with her adult children, their spouses and children.

'62 Helen (Wagner) Hagel enjoys retirement with her family of four children and 12 grandchildren. Over the years, she and her husband have enjoyed traveling to all 50 states in addition to some international trips. She is also actively volunteering with her church and the Parkinson Foundation.

'62 Kathy (Lewellen) Phillips can't wait to see her fellow classmates during Homecoming weekend Oct. 12-14. They will be celebrating their 50-year class reunion. Kathy lives in Georgia.

'66 Sarah (Dove) Reinemeyer lives in East Texas and is retired from Texaco. She volunteers at her hospital auxiliary. Sadly, her husband passed away in April, but before he died they were able to accomplish many things together, including a trip to Amman Jordan to visit their oldest daughter, who is a US Diplomat Cultural

Affairs Officer, in the US Embassy, and a trip to see Petra, one of the ancient wonders of the world.

'68 Carol Jean (Stipetich) DeFeo stays very busy serving the Kansas City community through her charitable work. Carol Jean actively volunteers with Avila University Alumni Association, the Boy Scouts, and most recently helped with the search for the new principal at Christ the King School in Kansas City, Mo.

'69 Cecelia "Cece" (Gatson) Grindel retired from Georgia State University on June 1, 2012. She will continue to work with doctoral students, but is enjoying her new retirement status! Mike, her husband, plans to retire in December and they will be moving to The Villages, Fl. With the new move they look forward to living near their daughter, Mary, their son, David, and their families in Tampa. They are making plans for various trips they will be taking the next few years, including more frequent visits to Boston to enjoy their son, Chuck, his wife, and their two children.

'70 Maria (Spaeth) Murphy and her husband, Tom, happily retired in 2010 to southern California. They live near their three children and five grandchildren and enjoy spending their days enjoying life!

'71 Barbara (Walsh) Bouchey has returned from a three-week vacation to Ireland to visit family and friends and continue her genealogy research. Ireland was a beautiful country to visit with very charming people! She also had recent visits with fellow '71 alums **Patty (Scherer) Lawhorn** and **Sharon (O'Neill) Cirone**.

'72 Helen (Davies) Swetala recently retired after 40 years in nursing (in critical care) from St. Joseph Medical Center in Kansas City, Mo. where she has worked for 35+ years.

'73 Debbie (Frantz) Mentgen retired from SBC (now AT&T) after a 28 year career with the company. She continued her education after leaving Avila and earned an MBA at Washington University in St. Louis. She is excited to announce she is a first-time grandmother with the July 27 birth of Eva Hurtado Mentgen. Debbie has many fond memories of her time at Avila, especially of Sister de la Salle (Music) Sister Rose Mary Willett (business), and Sister Jane Adelsberger (English).

'73 Sally (Fechtel) Alley keeps busy as the Developmental Education Adjunct Instructor for State Fair Community College in Sedalia, Mo.

'76 Susan (Reed) Evers works as a disease manager with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas City and lives with her family in Overland Park, Kan.

'76 Dennis Gibson is a franchise and asset marketing specialist for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and lives in Peachtree Corners, Ga. He recently worked hard to produce a school literary anthology to serve as a legacy for the class of '76.

'76 Linda (Peoples) Hagerty is a Special Education Program Specialist assigned to Del Mar Union School District in Del Mar, Ca. She provides administrative support for district special education programs for students age three through grade six.

'77 Judy (Gallagher) Budde and her husband Jim celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 1. Part of their celebration included a mass in Orscheln Chapel on the Avila campus.

'79 Pat (Cronin) Hardin is the president of Phoenix Healthcare Solutions in Belton, Mo. Pat is passionate about serving the Kansas City community and is currently board chair at Notre Dame de Sion. A highlight of her work with the Sion board included leading the search for the new Head of School, who started in July 2012.

'82 Bob Dehaemers enjoys retirement in Arlington, Texas. He continues to serve the nursing profession by traveling as a Citizen Ambassador Delegate with the People to People Eisenhower Foundation. On occasion he has been a presenter to healthcare organizations and hospitals located in China, India, Vietnam, and Cambodia. He also spends a significant amount of time in NYC for the Broadway show productions.

'82 Lori (Boyer) Tupper and her husband, Michael, moved to Lawrence, Mich. After a five-year home missionary term in the Appalachian Mountains of Southeastern Kentucky. She is currently working with developmentally disabled adults and senior citizens to provide in-home care through Community Mental Health.

'83 Stacie Bone is staying busy with her position as Remote Coder III for Truman Medical Centers and playing golf.

'83, '84 Jeff Hayes was promoted to executive vice president at Essential Health-care Management. He will be responsible for creating and developing national accounts programs for EHM clients.

'83 Anne Smith works as a public health nurse for the Lawrence-Douglas

County Health Department and lives in Leawood, Kan. Her daughter, Sarah, has been admitted into the Avila nursing program and is scheduled to graduate in the spring of 2014.

'84 Kathy Roos-Schimmel retired from Center School District after 25 years of teaching. She now works part-time as a Special Education Teacher at Center Elementary School. She is married and has two daughters.

'87 Teresa (Lee) Russett lives in Fremont, Calif. and has been a labor and delivery nurse for 10 years. She has two sons, Josh, who is about to graduate from high school, and Christopher, who is about to graduate from Colorado State University.

'89 Carmen (Canzonere) Bisacca teaches 1st grade at Our Lady of the Presentation Catholic School. She was honored in 2010 with The Sister of Charity Award Excellence in Teaching.

'93, '99 Tamela Handie serves as a Senior Advisor to Kansas City Mayor Sly James. Tamela also continues her ties to Avila as one of the featured MBA graduates in Avila's current MBA marketing and promotions and she recently joined the Avila Alumni Association as a board member.

'93 Leigh Anne (Wilson) Neal is currently working on her doctorate degree at Baker University.

'94 Karen Baum and her husband Bill are excited to announce they broke ground on August 1, 2012 for their new home. They affectionately refer to this dream home as G&G's Farm (grandma and grandpa). They look forward to the day when it will be filled with the laughter of all their beautiful grandchildren.

'94 Jennifer Spaw began a new career and is now the proud owner and chief baker at Cake-ology. The business specializes in traditional baked goods like cakes, cupcakes, cookies and mini-pies, including vegan, gluten-free and custom orders. They are located in Kansas City, Mo.

'96 Maria (Swindell) Gus is executive director of the Bartlesville Convention & Visitors Bureau in Bartlesville, Okla. and was nominated for "Citizen of the Year" by the Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise. The nominees were profiled in a special "Progress" edition of the paper, and readers voted to determine the winner.

'98 Denise (Gaynor) Rangel married Juan Rangel on July 7, 2012. The couple honeymooned in the Caribbean. Denise

is the school principal at Belton Freshman Center in Belton, Mo.

'99 Jessica Pankey received the DAISY Award in recognition of her compassionate and caring nursing skills as a registered nurse at St. Luke's Hospital. Pankey is in the Avila University athletics hall of fame in women's basketball and also was a two-year letter winner in volleyball. She is the mother of five children, ages 4-12.

'00, '07 Erica Berg graduated summa cum laude with a master of public health degree in November 2012 from A.T. Still University School of Health Sciences. She works as senior service coordinator and community builder for the Aurora Housing Authority and lives in Denver.

'00, '07 Raquel (Lathan) Thomas has been selected as the new leader of the University of Kansas Rock Chalk Dance Team. Raquel is the former assistant Glitter Girls dance coach at Avila and former captain of the Kansas City Chiefs cheerleaders.



'02 Alicia Cabrera Hill and her husband Josh Hill welcomed their daughter June Angelina Hill on April 27, 2012 at 7:20 pm. June was 6 lbs. and 19 oz.

'03 Tim Greenwell is the principal at Liberty Elementary School in Flower Mound, Texas, part of the Lewisville Independent School District. He lives in north Dallas.

'05 Brenda Kindle White is owner, president and chief executive officer of Password Trucking/Logistics LLC, an over-the-road trucking and brokerage company. She lives in Grain Valley, Mo.

'05 Debra Cornelius has accepted a position as senior loan officer at Pulaski Home Lending. She will work at both the Overland Park, Kan. and Belton, Mo. offices.

'05 Alexander Guhr is reaching out to Tampa, Florida alums to encourage them to attend the Florida Avila Alumni Reception in Jan. 2013. President Ron Slepitzka will be the keynote speaker. If interested in

attending, contact Alex at alexanderguhr@hotmail.com or Jessie.fuller@avila.edu.

'06 Donna Jungman was promoted to Marketing Manager at Menorah Medical Center in Overland Park, Kan. Donna also recently joined the Avila Alumni Association as board member.



'07 Sherry Perry Golden and husband Jamie welcomed son Matthew on March 12, 2012. Matthew weighed 9 pounds, 12 ounces and was 21 inches in length. Golden works as a senior audit analyst at HNTB in Kansas City, Mo.

'07 Lauren McCarthy will be co-chairing Avila's 37th Annual Steer Dinner and Auction Feb. 16, 2013. Her parents, John and Nancy McCarthy, are longtime supporters of Avila University and higher education in our community. They will serve as honorary chairs of the annual event to raise scholarship funds.

'08 Jason and Teresa (Diebal) Loden successfully passed their medical board exams. They are anticipating a May 2013 graduation from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine as doctors of osteopathic medicine. They are currently in residency moving to a new rotation each month. Jason plans to specialize in general surgery and Teresa plans to specialize in pediatrics.

'08 Judie (Bunia) White loves her teaching job in the Shawnee Mission School District. She recently submitted her master's project at KU.

'08 Amanda (Campos) Kies is living in Fairview Heights, Ill. and recently was hired as assistant manager at New York & Co.

'09 Michael Brun enlisted in the U.S. Navy after graduation and serves as an electronics technician. He lives in Ontario, Calif.

'09 Nick Ward-Bopp is a financial aid coordinator at UMKC, living in Kansas City, Mo. He just completed a major project encouraging recent graduates to take on work-for-rent projects rehabbing older buildings in Kansas City, Mo.

'09 Bernadette Weeks recently moved to Ohio to pursue her master's in Pastoral Ministry at the University of Dayton. She anticipates finishing the program in 2015. After graduate school her plan is to work as a campus minister.

'09, '12 Bailey (Umstattd) Carr put the final touches on her capstone project for her master's degree at Avila last summer. She and a fellow classmate worked on a project to help the Lee's Summit Education Foundation. She is the assistant director of admissions at Avila.

'10 Banen Chaney is a teacher at North Kansas City High School in Kansas City, Mo. She also serves as the Head Cheer and Dance Coach. She lives in Kansas City, Mo. – just down the street from Avila.

'10 Julia (Fleck) Ubert married Steven Ubert on July 7, 2012 in Kansas City, Mo. They are currently working on their honeymoon plans, which they will take in 2013. Julia is working on her master's degree in theatre from the University of Kansas.

'10 Jessie (Armstrong) Hassler married John Hassler on April 14, 2012. They reside in Kansas City, Mo. Jessie is a nurse on the NICU at Overland Park Regional.

'10 Valerie Reed is the Marketing and PR Coordinator at the Kansas City Police Credit Union in addition to being the owner of Valerie Kay Communications. Valerie specializes in advertising, branding, media, photography, design, and writing. Valerie just joined the Avila Alumni Association Board as a board member.



'11 Bethany Sieren Bauer gave birth to Kaden Wesley Bauer at 9:17 a.m. Aug. 20. Kaden weighed 5 pounds, 10 1/2 ounces and was 18 inches long.

'11 Loretta Stanzel was excited to begin her career as a Healthcare Consultant with Perceptive Software in May 2012. Perceptive Software is a leading creator of enterprise content management and business process management software products and solutions.

'12 Emilee Bickleman is the Real Time Correspondent and Media Intern at The Kansas City Royals. Her responsibilities include assisting with social media duties, and writing and editing stories and video stories of fans, players, and employees. During the July All Star Game, hosted by The Kansas City Royals, she worked on media set-up and took celebrity and behind-the-scene photos.

'12 Suzanne Muldrew passed her nursing board exams and began her nursing career in July at the brand new Cardiac and Family Medicine Progressive Care Unit at the University of Kansas Hospital.

'12 Laura Tripp passed her nursing board exams and began her nursing career in July at the brand new Cardiac and Family Medicine Progressive Care Unit at the University of Kansas Hospital.

'12 Jessica (Billups) Clutter married Christopher Clutter on June 19, 2011. Christopher is in the Army and they recently moved to North Carolina where he is stationed at Fort Bragg. Jessica is currently searching for a position as an elementary school teacher.

'12 Chantell Garrett continues her non-profit work with R.U.B.I.E.S., Inc. (www.rubiesinc.org), a 501c3 that focuses on the mentoring needs of underserved girls in the Kansas City community, which she founded in 2010. Garrett also is waiting to see if she is a finalist for the L'Oréal Women of Worth Award (www.womenofworth.com). Please continue to keep an eye out and an ear open as this Avila alumna might need your vote in November. If a winner, R.U.B.I.E.S., Inc. will receive a \$25,000 gift.



Attention Florida Alums

Join your fellow Avila alums for the Tampa and Naples, Florida Avila Alumni Receptions in Jan. 2013. President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA, will be the keynote speaker at the events. If you are interested in attending or learning more, email alumni@avila.edu or contact Jessie Fuller Clark at Jessie.fuller@avila.edu.

in memoriam



Avila University lost a dear friend and longtime contributor in **Cathy Mueller**, who passed away May 5, 2012, following a long illness. Cathy, vice president of client experience at Cerner, lived life to the fullest and was dedicated to helping young men and women living in Kansas City's urban core achieve a brighter future by supporting scholarship funding at Avila and other values-based Catholic education institutions. Mueller served on Avila's Board of Trustees from 2007 until her death and was a member of the Executive Committee of the Board.

"Cathy brought a focus on students, their full developments, and a passion for excellence to all that she did," said President Ron Slepitsky, Ph.D., CSJA. "She was action-oriented and wanted to not simply envision greatness, but roll up her sleeves and make it happen. She was never afraid to act on her values and beliefs and thus lead the way. I couldn't have asked for more in a board member or friend."

In Cathy's honor Avila is working with Cerner and close friends of Cathy to create the Catherine Mueller Memorial Trustee Scholar for an Avila junior or senior software engineering student. In addition to a stipend, the student will have an internship opportunity at Cerner to expand their real-world experience.

Those wishing to make a memorial gift to honor Cathy and her service to Avila's students can contact Robin Rowland at 816-501-2450 or robin.rowland@avila.edu. Online memorial gifts can also be securely made at avila.edu/give.

'46 Marjorie McGonigle, 89, passed away on June 27, 2012. She received a bachelor of science in sociology. She graduated summa cum laude.

'49 Mary Morgan, 83, passed away on June 28, 2012. She graduated in the inaugural class from the College of St. Teresa Department of Nursing (now Avila University).

'49 Lois Imogene "Nanny" Heath, 83, passed away on July 9, 2012. She graduated in the inaugural class from the College of St. Teresa Department of Nursing.

'56 Joann Teahan, 76, passed away Sept. 10, 2012. She graduated with a bachelor of science in medical technology and was a Class Alumni Partner, Steer Dinner Committee Member and former member of Avila's Board of Counselors.

'58 Joanne King, 77, passed away March 6, 2012. She received her bachelor of science in nursing. She was associate dean of the Research Hospital School of Nursing.

'59 Rita Staab Porter passed away May 27, 2012. She graduated from the nursing program and was a diploma nurse.

'63 Loree Dallam "Pat" Breed, 89, passed away July 14, 2012. She received a bachelor of arts in English.

'64 Orpha Ann Labonte Hennessey, 90, passed away May 31, 2012. She received a bachelor of arts in sociology.

'77 Belinda Roper, 56, passed away June 10, 2012. She graduated with a BSN in nursing. She also was a lieutenant in the Navy for 4 1/2 years and served in the Gulf War. She received the Humanitarian Medal for her service and hard work.

'83 Douglas Hunter Strieby, 67, passed away July 21, 2012. He received his bachelor of arts degree in public administration.

'84 James "Pat" Mortko, 54, passed away on April 16, 2012 in Lenexa, Kan. He received a bachelor of science in radiology.

'85 Judith Ann Page, 67, passed away July 19, 2012. She graduated with a bachelor of science in business. She was a recipient of Avila's lifetime alumni award.

'89 James Alexander, 46, passed away April 23, 2012. He earned a bachelor's degree in business-legal assistant.

'09 Elizabeth Grace Rich, 56, passed away July 23, 2012. She received her master's in psychology and was pursuing further studies in art therapy and counseling at Avila.

'11 Jarad Michael Free, 32, died Sept. 9, 2012. He received his bachelor of science in business administration and worked as a financial advisor at JP Morgan.

Col. Dale Lee Strannigan, Missouri National Guard, retired, and a friend of Avila University, passed away April 30, 2012. Strannigan, 77, was the husband of Mary Alice (Staggs) Strannigan '64.

Harold Heiman, a veteran of the Navy who fought in World War II, passed away April 16, 2012. Heiman, 88, was the husband of Mary Elizabeth Hessel Heiman '47.

To make a memorial gift, please visit avila.edu/give



Rob Wade named Head Softball Coach

The Avila University Eagles athletic department has hired Rob Wade as their new head softball coach. Wade was most recently the head softball coach at Blue Valley North High School as well as head coach and founder of the Kansas City Zephyrs Gold Junior club softball team. Over the past seven years with the Zephyrs, Wade aided in the development and recruiting of over 35 NCAA Division I softball players. Wade has also coached several all-star teams as he served as head coach for the Adidas Futures All Star Team last month, an assistant coach in the St. Louis All Starts vs. US Olympic Team game in 2008, and was co-head coach in the 2009 Adidas All Star Class game in Boulder, Colorado.

"I am tremendously excited to become the head coach of Avila softball," said Wade. "It is my goal for the program to ascend to the top of the HAAC conference and to compete for a national championship. I have high expectations for the future of Avila softball."

Wade replaces Alicia Baker who led the Eagles to a 9-35 record in her one year at the helm. The Eagles graduate four seniors and are tabbed to return 15 letter winners led by HAAC Honorable Mention shortstop Darah Matheis.

Avila Athletic Director Gary Gallup had the following to say on Wade's hiring, "Rob Wade is a tremendous addition to our outstanding athletic staff. He is very highly thought of by his peers in the softball community in the Kansas City area and throughout the nation. His experience and passion will help us develop a first-class softball program. ☐

Former Glitter Girl joins KC Chiefs cheer team



What began as a lark ended up as a golden opportunity to perform on a big stage for Avila University senior Erin Penney.

Penney, a three-year veteran of the Glitter Girls, Avila's award-winning dance team, said she decided at the last minute to show up and try out for the cheerleading team of the Kansas City Chiefs last February.

She had recently returned from the Universal Dance and Cheer Association Collegiate National Championships in Florida, where she competed with the Glitter Girls, and decided the Chiefs tryout might be a good experience looking forward.

"My expectations were really low, but my hopes were high," said Penney, a nursing major who is scheduled to graduate in May, 2013. "I was just in it for the experience."

So, Penney was thrilled and ecstatic when she was one of 33 selected out of a pool of 200 young women to be a Chiefs cheerleader for the 2012 NFL season.

"I'm very excited and still a little bit shocked," she said. "I guess it was just meant to be. It's going to be a busy season, but I'm ready for it."

Penney said she's already enjoyed one perk of being a Chiefs cheerleader – an all-expenses paid trip to Aruba to shoot the cheer team's calendar.

Penney is the seventh member of coach Cindy Freeman's Glitter Girls dance team to become a Chiefs cheerleader.

"Erin is not just a good representative of the dance team, she's a good representative of academics at Avila," Freeman said. "She's a role model. She's just been a pleasure to teach, and her professionalism is just a perfect fit for the Chiefs." ☐

Former Glitter Girls who became Chiefs Cheerleaders:

Liz DiGiramo	2000-2004
Celine Ziller	2004-2005
Kari Fajen	2000-2001
Caitlyn Smith	2006-2007
Kristen Cira	2002-2006
Emma Vogt	2007-2011
Erin Penney	2009-2012

Former Eagles pitcher takes big step toward the major leagues

Chris Thomas, a 6-foot-2 right-handed pitcher who just capped his collegiate career by leading Avila University to a Heart of America Athletic Conference title and NAIA tournament appearance, recently took a major step toward realizing his dream of one day playing baseball in the major leagues.

Thomas, a Liberty, Mo. native, was signed by the defending World Series champion St. Louis Cardinals and assigned to one of their rookie clubs in the Gulf Coast League in Jupiter, Fla.

In fact, Thomas made his professional pitching debut for the GCL Cardinals June 19 against the GCL Astros, working one inning and retiring all three batters he faced, earning the team's first win of the season. A month later, he'd made 12 appearances and posted an excellent earned-run average of 0.68, earning himself a promotion to the Cardinals' "A" team in Batavia, N.Y.

"I hadn't thrown in about a month, since the last game I pitched for Avila," Thomas said over the phone from Florida. "It was just getting my rhythm back. It's going pretty well."

Things have been going well for Thomas since last spring, when he went 12-2 in 14 starts for the Eagles and posted an impressive earned-run average of 1.53. He struck out 121 batters while walking only 21.

Perhaps most impressively, he threw a fastball that consistently clocked north of 90 mph.

"Major league scouts are always looking for that

kind of raw talent," said Avila baseball coach Daryl Cronk. "He has to keep developing his change-up and slider. But, I think chances are real good for Chris. He worked hard for this, and he deserves it."

Thomas' talents began attracting major league scouts early last spring. Cronk, who played a couple of seasons in the minor leagues and once scouted for the Tampa Bay Rays, contacted some scouts he knew and interest started trickling in.

"I played in the Independent League and knew what it took to play at the professional level," Cronk said. "Knowing what I had in Chris, I wanted him to have that chance."

Thomas and Cronk were "cautiously optimistic" that Thomas would get selected in the 2012 Major League Baseball draft. That didn't happen, but a few days later, Thomas received a call from a pair of scouts from the Cardinals, who scheduled a day to come to the Avila baseball field and watch Thomas pitch.

A few days after that, the Cardinals offered Thomas a contract.

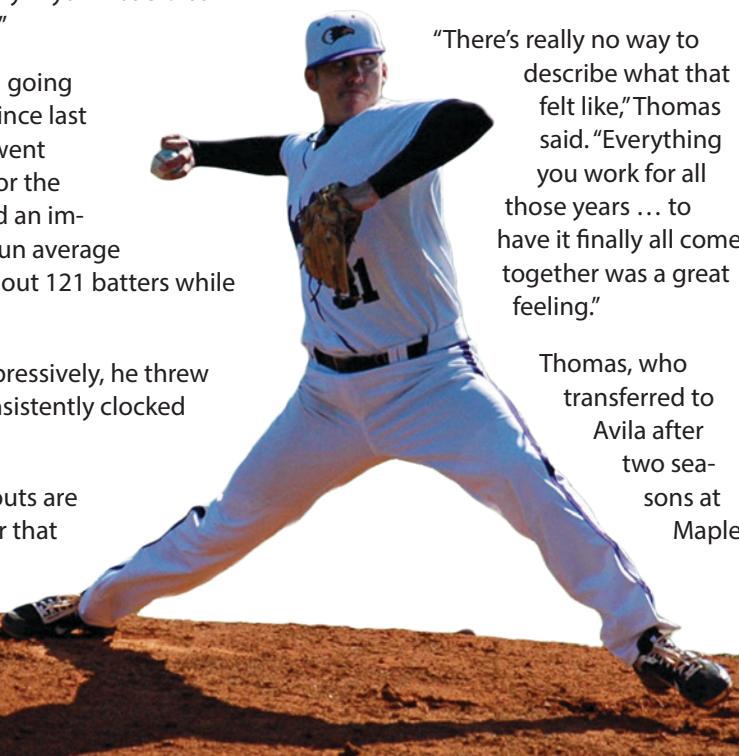
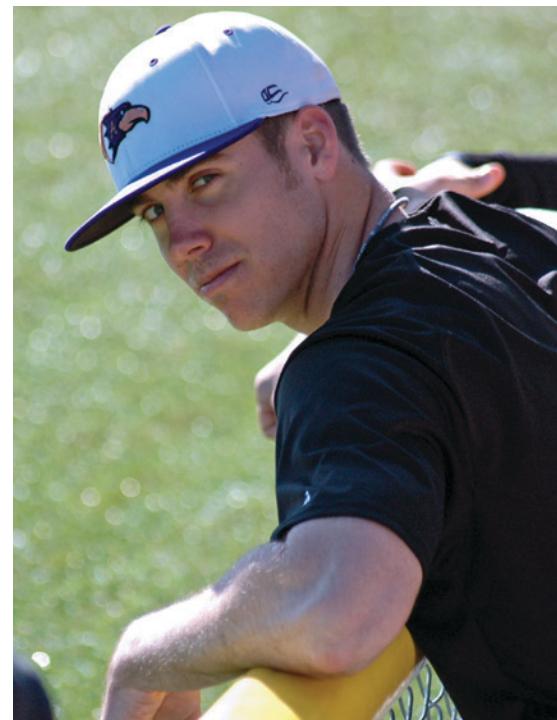
"There's really no way to describe what that felt like," Thomas said. "Everything you work for all those years ... to have it finally all come together was a great feeling."

Thomas, who transferred to Avila after two seasons at Maple

Woods Community College in Kansas City, Mo., said his two years with the Eagles were instrumental in getting him to this point.

"Last year was my favorite season of my college career," he said of the Eagles' 41-16 season which saw them win the regular-season HAAC championship and advance to the NAIA tournament for the second time in the last three years. "The coaches were great, helped me a lot. Coach Cronk did a great job. He's one of the best coaches I've had and worked hard for us. I give him a lot of credit for helping me get here."

Cronk said, "I just wanted this for him, but it's good for our program, too. It helps with our recruiting. Now, we can tell recruits we've had a kid go on to affiliated ball, that these opportunities exist here." ▀



REDEMPTION

Save the Date!

Avila University presents

Harry Truman Lecture Series

Featuring Louis Zamperini by live video conference

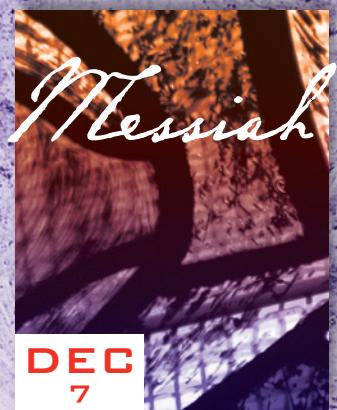
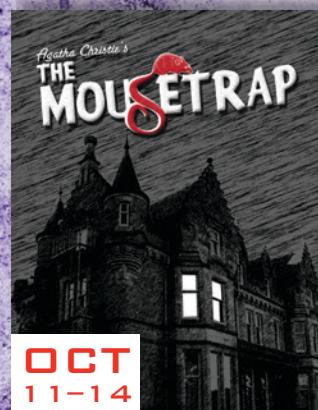
WWII prisoner of war survivor and former American Olympic distance runner

Mr. Zamperini will share his story of survival, resilience and redemption as reflected in Laura Hillenbrand's book about his life, *Unbroken*.

Thursday, November 8 • 5:00 p.m.

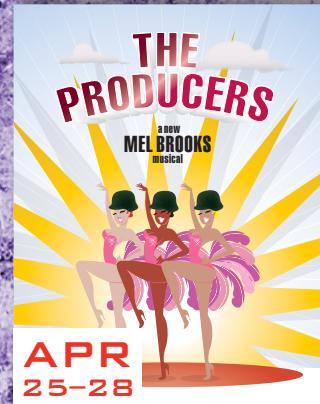
Avila University's Goppert Theatre

Unbroken is the book selection for Avila University's first year class Common Reading Program.



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Understanding the importance of scholarship

Connie Kassick John '61 and Ed John

Securing Avila's Heritage

Creating an endowed scholarship to benefit future generations of Avila students is just one way you can join The Avila Heritage Society. The Heritage Society was established in 1988 to recognize the remarkable contributions of Avila alumni and friends who have made provisions in their estate plans or lifetime planned gifts to support the future needs of the University. Such provisions may include:

- Bequests through Wills and Trusts
- Charitable Remainder or Lead Trusts
- Appreciated Securities
- Real Estate and Life Estates in Homes
- Gift Annuities
- Life Insurance Policies

To find out more about joining Avila's Heritage Society or the gift vehicles above, please contact Jessie Fuller Clark, senior director of advancement, at 816-501-3613.

Connie Kassick John '61 still remembers fondly the days living in the house with her Loretto Academy classmate and friend, Judy Blossom and her family on East Concord Ave. in Kansas City, Mo. She walked the two or so blocks every day to the College of St. Teresa.

"It was such a pretty neighborhood, and it seemed small and close-knit even though it was in the middle of the city," she said. "It was a wonderful place to be."

Much has changed since Connie attended the college back in the late 1950s and early '60s. St. Teresa's Academy, a prestigious girls prep school, sits where the College of St. Teresa then resided at 5600 Main St. in Kansas City, MO. And, the college has become Avila University and moved a few miles south, to 119th Street and Wornall Road. But Connie still holds warm memories of her alma mater ... as it was then and as it is today.

She also remembers the financial aid she received in the form of scholarship and the help it provided her family.

"Originally, I got a scholarship in nursing, then switched to education," said Connie, who taught three years in the Kansas City, Kan. Diocese following graduation. Then after being a stay-at-home mom to three sons, she taught 15 years in the Independence, Mo. public school system before retiring in 1999. "When you consider costs today to when I went to St. Teresa's College, there's no comparison."

Connie and her husband of 48 years, Ed, now are giving back as members of Avila's Heritage Society. They will be making a gift to support scholarships at Avila in their estate.

"Avila has done marvelous things," she said. "I was back last year for our 50th reunion and was just so impressed with what they're doing for students. I'm just very happy that we can contribute in some way. It's exciting to be part of what Avila University is today!"



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